TL 2039

PROJECT PROPOSAL ON POLITICAL PRISONERS IN INDONESIA AND EAST TIMOR

Introduction

In the last few months an increased number of arrests have taken place in Indonesia and East Timor.
The press clampdown in June 1994 created a wave of protests in the big cities in Indonesia. In March of this year security officers raided offices of Indonesian NGOs with the intention to destroy the existence of the samizdat/alternative press. During the raids several key persons were arrested while others had to go into hiding because arrest warrants had been issued.

In Dili, East Timor, a wave of arrests took place since January 1995. The trials against the demonstrators is expected to take place any moment.

The Indonesian pro-democracy defendants will face charges along articles in the Indonesian criminal law with possible prison sentences between 2 till 6 years. The Timorese defendants will face trials varying from security disturbances to charges based on the notorious anti-subversion law.

In both cases, it is of utmost importance that the defendants will receive all the possible assistance: legal and material assistance.

Aims of the project

To set up a special fund for the purpose of providing financial assistance to the defendants. The fund will be used to cover the costs of different aspects of the trial:
1. legal aid assistance; providing the defendants with defence lawyers.
2. travel expenses; sometimes lawyers from Java have to be sent to Dili, sometimes witnesses for the defendants have to travel from different parts of the country.
3. monitoring the trial; to give information to the outside world, it is essential to publish a leaflet or newsletter on the trial proceedings.
4. publishing defence pleas; the courtroom is often the only place where a defendant can speak openly, which often happens. Defence pleas often become important political statements and is therefore essentail to be circulated widely.
5. campaigning; during the trials, the pro-democracy movement continue to do all kinds of actions during the trial.
6. general material assistance for the defendants, considering the bad prison conditions.

Specific urgent matters

Possible trials will start very soon in Jakarta against Tri Agus Siswomihardjo (chief editor of KABAR DARI PIJAR), Achmad Taufik (Vice-Chair of the Independent Journalist Association and board member of INDEPENDEN) and Eko Maryadi

(INDEPENDEN and also active member of AJI, the Independent Journalist Association).
Other people who face possible arrest : Rachland Nashidik, Hakim Hatta and Santoso.

In East Timor David Dias Ximenes and Nuno de Andrade Sarmento Corvelho, arrested on 14 February, will likely face trial. About 16 of the thirty students who launched a demo on 9 Jan. in Dili will possibly also face trial.

Medium and long term aims

The fund will be needed for a longer term. In previous political trials sometimes the campaigning and monitoring was limited because of the lack of funding. The inclusion of dedicated lawyers from different cities was often impossible because of the same reason. We hope with the establishment of the fund that we can overcome this problem.

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